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ABSTRACT

The first section of this brochure deals with standards for educational public relations programs. Eight sections present standards in the areas of (1) clear concept of the public relations program, (2) provision for public relations professional(s) in the organization, (3) relationship of the public relations professional to the governing body, the administration and staff of the organization, (4) provision for adequate resources for the public relations program, (5) provision for internal communications, (6) provision for external communications, (7) provision for evaluation of program performance, and (8) provision for longrange planning. The second section outlines general and specific standards for educational public relations professionals; and discusses professional preparation, experience, demonstrated ability, and professional growth and development. (Author/DN)

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Educational Public Relations Standards

For Programs For Professionals

Adopted by the
National School Public Relations Association

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Standards for Educational Public Relations Programs

Adopted March 23, 1968
by the Executive Committee of the
National School Public Relations Association

Educational public relations is a planned and systematic two-way process of communication between an educational organization and its internal and external publics. Its program serves to stimulate a better understanding of the role, objectives, accomplishments, and needs of the organization. Educational public relations is a management function which interprets public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual organization with the public interest, and executes a program of action to encourage public involvement and to earn public understanding and acceptance.

For the purposes of these public relations program standards, the term "educational organization" includes school districts; community colleges; and national, regional, state, or local associations and agencies.

I. Clear concept of the purposes of the public relations program

1. The educational organization shall commit to writing a clear and concise policy statement with respect to its public relations program.

2. The policy statement shall be approved through formal action of the governing body of the organization, shall be published in its policy manual, and shall be subjected to review by the governing body annually.

3. The policy statement shall express the purposes of the organization's public relations program and shall provide for the delegation of such authority to the executives of the organization as deemed necessary to facilitate the achievement of such purposes.

4. The provisions of the policy statement shall be made known to the entire staff or membership of the organization through all appropriate means. As a minimum, the provisions shall be published in the personnel handbook or other publications of the organization.

5. Commitment to the achievement of the purposes of the organization's public relations policy shall be demonstrated through the allocation of adequate human and financial resources to the public relations program.

II. Provision for public relations professional(s) in the organization

6. Recognition of public relations as a management function of primary importance shall be demonstrated through the existence of a public relations unit in the organization staffed by professional public relations personnel.

III. Relationship of the public relations professional to the governing body, the administration, and staff of the organization

7. The executive officer in charge of a public relations unit shall be directly responsible to the chief executive of the organization and shall be a full participating member of his administrative cabinet.

8. The public relations unit of an organization shall function in a counseling capacity to the governing body of the organization and its entire staff or membership.

IV. Provision for adequate resources for the public relations program

A. Professional public relations staffing

A major requirement for a public relations program is staff to develop and carry out that program. Major public relations staffing standards shall include:

9. Sufficient staff to accomplish the objectives of an organization and to cope with the variety of conditions and problems inherent in specific total programs.

10. As a general rule, a minimum allocation of full-time professional public relations staff according to size of student enrollments in school districts shall be:

    One for up to 24,999 pupils
    Two for 25,000 to 49,999 pupils
    Three for 50,000 to 99,999 pupils
    Five for 100,000 and over

11. Local education associations shall have qualified public relations consultants on either a full-time or part-time basis with state and national affiliates providing additional public relations help where and when necessary.

12. The public relations staff and consultants shall meet NSPRA's Standards for Educational Public Relations Professionals.

13. Provision shall be made for continuous quality public relations training and development of the members of the professional public relations staff.

B. Operating budget and financing

Operating budgets shall include sufficient funds for the public relations services and programs recommended in these Standards. Provision for financing should be based on such factors as enrollment, membership, total operational expenditures, and special communication needs of the organization. Major public relations services to be financed, other than staff, shall include:

14. Materials and equipment

15. Facilities
16. Technical services—publications, advertising, audiovisual, radio, television, etc.
17. Professional growth activities
18. Research and evaluation.

C. Development of factual information

A reservoir of factual information is essential to the public relations program. This requires a systematic process for providing dependable information for the communications and public relations functions.

19. The organization shall maintain a research program providing information about curriculum, finance, construction, legislation, innovations, staffing, teacher-board relations, population trends, public opinion, and other major areas of concern.
20. The public relations unit shall have immediate access to all research information.
21. The public relations unit shall have authority to initiate or suggest pertinent research studies.

V. Provision for internal communications

A sound and effective system of internal communications is a vital part of the public relations program. This system shall provide for:

22. Identification of specific individuals and groups within an organization with which continuous communications and relationships are required.
23. Procedures for determining what kind of information should be supplied to staff with particular emphasis on relative importance and the degree of staff and public interest.
24. Selection and judicious use of a variety of means and media for communicating with staff.
25. Encouraging, receiving, analyzing, and utilizing of feedback.
26. Quality inservice public relations training for the entire staff or membership of the organization.

VI. Provision for external communications

An effective public relations program must continuously utilize numerous avenues for communications with the public. The external public relations program shall provide for:

27. Identification of specific individuals and community groups with whom continuous communications and relationships are required.

28. Procedures for determining what kind of information should be supplied, with particular emphasis on relative importance and the degree of public interest.

29. Selection and judicious use of a variety of appropriate communication media and channels in general, and mass media in particular.

30. Encouraging, receiving, analyzing, and utilizing of feedback.

31. Identification and involvement of human resources of the community in general, and the community organizations in particular.

VII. Provision for evaluation of program performance

32. The organization shall provide for the evaluation of the performance of its public relations program.

33. The staff or membership of the organization shall be included in any evaluation process.

VIII. Provision for long-range planning

34. The organization shall provide for long-range public relations planning.

35. The organization shall develop a plan for anticipating, preparing for, and dealing with the public relations aspects of crisis situations.

36. Emphasis shall be given to seeking and developing new and different avenues of communications and relationships.

Standards for Educational Public Relations Professionals

Adopted March 23, 1969
by the Executive Committee of the
National School Public Relations Association

An educational public relations professional is a person who performs public relations functions in a staff or executive capacity with an educational organization.

An educational organization, as defined by the NSPRA Standards for Educational Public Relations Programs, includes school districts; community colleges; and national, regional, state, or local associations and agencies.

Executive is defined to mean the person in charge of the public relations program, public relations department, or public relations division in the organization.

Staff is defined to mean anyone employed in the organization in a public relations position under the public relations executive.

The NSPRA Standards for Educational Public Relations Professionals have been developed for the following purposes:

(1) To elevate the profession of educational public relations.

(2) To provide professional development and guidance to the educational public relations professional.

(3) To provide assistance to administrators of educational organizations seeking to recruit competent public relations professionals.

(4) To provide assistance to institutions of higher learning in establishing and improving curricula for the training of educational public relations professionals.

I. General Standards

General standards for an educational public relations professional shall include:

A. Understanding and acceptance of the role of education in a free society.

B. Understanding and acceptance of the role and social responsibility of public relations for all educational institutions, organizations, and agencies in a free society.

C. Commitment to the improvement of educational opportunity for all.

D. Professional performance and ethical behavior in educational public relations. (Note: NSPRA will develop standards for professional public relations practices.)

II. Specific Standards

Specific standards for an educational public relations professional shall include: (A) Professional preparation, (B) Experience, (C) Demonstrated ability, and (D) Professional growth and development.

A. Professional Preparation

Standards for professional preparation shall include:

1. Minimum of a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university.
2. Study in the area of communications, including courses such as public relations, journalism, speech, marketing, advertising, graphic arts, radio, television, and writing.
3. Study in at least two of the following areas:
   a. *Behavioral sciences*—courses such as sociology, political science, psychology, and public administration.
   b. *Education*—courses such as school curriculum, methods of teaching, educational psychology, philosophy of education, school administration, and educational public relations.
   c. *Related disciplines*—courses and combinations or portions of courses which cover the public relations content not specifically included under communications, behavioral sciences, and education.

B. Experience

Standards for experience shall include at least one or a combination of the following:

1. Two years' full-time experience in an executive public relations responsibility with an educational organization.
2. Three years' full-time experience (or the equivalent time) in a staff public relations responsibility with an educational organization.
3. Three years' full-time experience in an executive public relations responsibility with an organization outside the area of education, plus one year in a professional capacity with an educational organization.
4. Four years' full-time experience in a staff public relations responsibility with an organization outside the area of education, plus one year in a professional capacity with an educational organization.
5. Four years' full-time experience in mass communications (press, radio, television, etc.) with news, editorial, or program responsibilities, plus one year in a professional capacity with an educational organization.
6. Five years' full-time experience in a professional capacity, plus one year in a full-time public relations responsibility, with an educational organization.
7. Three years' full-time experience as a college teacher of school public relations or related communications courses, plus either one year in a full-time public relations responsibility with an educational organization or three years of public relations consultant experience to educational organizations.

C. Demonstrated Ability

Standards for demonstrated ability shall include, in general, a working knowledge of comprehensive internal and external public relations programs, a mastery of basic communication skills, and a sensitivity to the importance of two-way communication. Specifically, the educational public relations pro-

fessional shall demonstrate these abilities through six or more of the following:

1. Employing effective human relations practices in the performance of public relations responsibilities.
2. Perceiving, identifying, and determining the implications of educational public relations problems.
3. Creating, proposing, and conducting activities designed to solve educational public relations problems.
4. Conducting continuous public relations activities that depend upon the nature, structure, and functions of mass media.
5. Planning, developing, and executing specific public relations projects essential to campaigns, interpretation of innovations, or other major activities.
6. Planning, developing, and using feedback processes, including opinion surveys.
7. Identifying and working with elements of power structures.
8. Identifying and working with individuals and citizens groups in the development and execution of the organization's program.
9. Involving staff and/or members of the organization in the development and execution of the organization's public relations program.

D. Professional Growth and Development

Standards for professional growth and development require that the educational public relations professional continue to refine his skills and expand his knowledge through:

1. Participating in recognized public relations seminars, conferences, workshops, and institutes.
2. Maintaining membership and participation in professional public relations associations and societies.
3. Pursuing additional study beyond Bachelor's Degree requirements in the areas listed under "Professional Preparation" (Standard II-A above).
4. Reading, researching, writing, speaking, and consulting in public relations.

Background of the Development of Standards for Educational Public Relations Programs and Personnel

In October 1966 Lewis R. Applegate, president of the National School Public Relations Association, appointed a special ad hoc committee to study school public relations standards. The recommendations of this committee were reported to Association members during the annual meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in July 1967 by committee chairman Joseph L. Davis, assistant superintendent for special services, Columbus, Ohio, Public Schools. Other members of the committee were Frank M. Harlacher Jr., coordinator, public information and publications, Washington County Board of Education, Hagerstown, Maryland, and Thomas E. Robinson, president of Glassboro State College in Glassboro, New Jersey.

Following the proposals by the ad hoc committee, the Association's Executive Committee agreed that a special Task Force on Standards should be established. Appointed to serve were Lewis R. Applegate (chairman), director of public relations, New Jersey Education Association; Joseph L. Davis; and Daniel K. Hess, director of information services, Aurora, Illinois, Public Schools, West Side. Eric Preusch, NSPRA director of professional development, served as staff consultant for the ad hoc committee and the Task Force on Standards.

Throughout the 1967-68 year the Task Force met frequently, preparing interim drafts which were reported to the Executive Committee and which were field tested via personal interviews with members throughout the country. The final report to establish standards for educational public relations programs was presented to the Association's Executive Committee and adopted March 23, 1968.

Attention of the Task Force during 1968-69 was devoted entirely to the further development of standards for educational public relations professionals. Following extensive field testing and feedback from members, the final report was presented to the Executive Committee and adopted March 23, 1969.